



THE FLY LEAF

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AN OPEN LETTER TO A FRIEND*

You were asking what features we need in a new library or addition to the library at Rice, and particularly about the part that might be devoted to rare and other special materials. In my opinion, this is a #1 priority, one of the most important features of any new construction.

For one thing, we very much need a place where our rare books and manuscripts can be consulted by scholars. At present we have no such place, merely a stack room, already overcrowded, where our rarest books are housed. Many rare books are in the open stacks for want of a place where they can be better cared for.

* The following description of an ideal Rare Book Room and Special Materials area appeared in the FLYLEAF some years ago. With the building of a new wing coming closer to reality, it is hoped that such an area may be provided, either from general funds or, possibly, as a memorial.

What I have in mind is a big pleasant room like the Rare Book Reading Room at the Huntington Library in California. In that room the scholars are assigned to individual desks or to places at long tables, and each can have his reading stand and his noiseless typewriter (because no ink is allowed). A few essential reference books are kept in the room and others are available in the adjacent Reference Room. The rare books and manuscripts themselves are of course kept in a special stack and given out from a charge desk, from which their use can be adequately supervised.

Such a place would not only greatly facilitate the use of rare books and thus promote scholarship, but it would also greatly ease our ever-present and growing problem of lack of sufficient faculty studies.

Second, after the Rare Books I should put the Fine Books. We need a Browsing Room, a place where

attractive editions, autographed copies, etc. can be read and enjoyed. We have the nucleus of a collection of beautiful books, but we hesitate to put them on the open shelves for fear of loss or unnecessary damage. Yet I hate to keep books away from readers, and to me there is nothing so dismal as a book which is a museum piece (except for the Gutenberg Bible, or something like that), and I can picture a Browsing Room where students can read books, just for the fun of it, in the most attractive of editions.

Third and next, but not third in importance, come the Rice Archives. At present these are confined, and I mean confined, to two little rooms in the basement. Neither of them is adequately lighted, and again there is no place where the materials can be spread out and consulted. Fortunately, in Bill Dix's days, a good start toward building a collection of Rice Archives was made, and this has been added to, and Miss Dean and Miss Turnbull have kept it in the

best possible order.

A fourth element, and this is really important, would be a room or rooms where mico-printed materials can be stored and used. Whether you like it or not, microfilm is going to be more and more necessary in the library of the future. These facilities are also at the point of uncomfortable (and hence inefficient) over-crowding in the Fondren.

So many things, including unobtainable rare books, are now available on microfilm or micro-cards that it would be most logical to have our micro-materials in this hoped-for Special Materials or Scholars' Library. Since the user of these materials and the reading machines needs instruction and some supervision, all micro-materials might well be kept in the area where other rare materials were being used; this would also save on the supervision.

These, then, are the parts of the new area

which I should like to see in the library: Rare Book and Manuscript Reading Room and Stacks, Browsing Room, Archives Room, and Micro-Materials Room. These need not all necessarily be separate rooms, although I think the Browsing Room should be apart from the others. And to these should be added an Exhibit Area, where we could have attractive displays of all kinds.

I am as sure as I can be that such a library would greatly increase our chances of receiving donations of rare books, historical papers, etc. It would also greatly ease our space problem in several fields.

People would enjoy giving us special and rare things if they knew they were going to be safely housed, appreciated, and used by qualified scholars.

Hardin Craig, Jr.

THE LIBRARY PASSES THE HALF-MILLION MARK

The Fondren Library's collection has passed the half-million mark with the cataloging of several new works by Rice professors. By a fortunate coincidence, the 500,000th book proved to be A New View of Chaucer, by Professor George G. Williams of the English Department, which has just been published by the Duke University Press. It was expected that the half-millionth book would be The Freedom of Reason by Professor Konstantin Kolenda of the Department of Philosophy, published by the Principia Press of Trinity University, but Professor Kolenda's book came out 499,999th.

By another interesting coincidence, credit for starting the library's second half-million went to Professor Wilfred S. Dowden, Chairman of the Department of English, whose 2-volume work, The Letters of Thomas Moore, published by the Oxford University Press, has just been received and has passed through the cataloging process as volumes 500,001 and 500,002.

Received too late to classify were An Introduction of Prehistoric Archeology, by Professor Frank Hole and Professor Robert F. Heizer (the latter a member of the University of California faculty); a new edition of Race Awareness in Young Children, by Dr. Mary Ellen Goodman; A Call to Order, by Professor Donald I. Wood; and Peace or Appeasement? Hitler, Chamberlain and the Munich Crisis, edited by Professor Francis L. Lowenheim. All these faculty works will soon be on display in the Library.

BROUN - THRUSTON GIFT

Mr. Philip H. Broun has presented the Library with several interesting items of which he is the editor or compiler. The first of these is the diary of Catherine Barbara Hopkins Broun, entitled Family Events, 1854-1889, and privately published in Houston in 1959. This is, as the title indicates, a modest recital of family events, but it is particularly full for the war years, 1861-1865. The family home, as Middleburg, Virginia, was in the path of armies of both sides, and this first-hand account of the war makes the diary an enthralling story and a valuable addition to the Library's Civil War collection.

The other items are genealogies, one for the Broun Family from 1740, and one for the Thruston Family from 1606. Each is done according to a different plan, and aside from their intrinsic interest, they furnish models of how a genealogy should be worked out. The Broun Family Tree, done in the form of a wheel of concentric circles radiating out from an ancestral hub, is of particular interest. This method of genealogical exposition was invented by Major Thomas Lee Broun of Charleston, West Virginia and was later corrected and supplemented by Mr. Philip H. Broun.

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